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Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba

Questions relating to information

Right of peoples to self-determination

Human rights questions

Letter dated 1 July 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose the text of the declaration made this morning, 1 July 2004, by the National Assembly of People's Power of the Republic of Cuba (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 29, 86, 116 and 117.

(*Signed*) Orlando **Requeijo Gual**
Ambassador
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Annex to the letter dated 1 July 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Declaration by the National Assembly of People's Power of the Republic of Cuba

The empire wants to crush the Cuban nation and insolently and arrogantly proclaims its intentions.

It is intensifying the economic war, internal subversion, anti-Cuban propaganda and pressure on the rest of the world to pave the way for a direct military intervention that would destroy the Revolution, put an end to our independence and sovereignty and realize the old annexionist dream of seizing control of Cuba.

Yesterday, Washington implemented new and brutal measures against both the Cuban people and Cubans living in the United States of America. These measures were defined by their authors as part of a plan to bring "a rapid end" to the revolutionary Government.

The new measures reinforce the unjust and discriminatory restrictions imposed on those Cubans, the only national group to which the United States Government, in flagrant violation of its own Constitution, dictates the kind of contact its members can have with their relatives and country of origin. They no longer even have the right to visit Cuba once a year. They can now do so only once every three years, and must be issued with a specific authorization valid for a maximum of 14 days in Cuba. The amount of money they may spend in Cuba or send to their families has been severely reduced. Visits and remittances are now strictly limited to what the Bush Administration describes as "immediate family" and arbitrarily exclude, inter alia, aunts and uncles, cousins and nephews and nieces. What legal precedent can the United States authorities cite for such an intrusion into individuals' private lives? Where are the "family values" so lauded by the current President and his friends? Is Mr. Bush still calling himself a "compassionate conservative"?

The authors of the measures and those responsible for enforcing them have warned that there will be no exceptions, that they will be applied retroactively and rigorously and that heavy fines and severe prison sentences await those who breach the embargo. A kind of apartheid has been created for Cubans living in the United States.

Yesterday also saw the cancellation of almost all the licences that, although subject to onerous restrictions, permitted some United States citizens to visit our country. Licences will not even be issued in cases where the visitor would not be spending any money in Cuba. This move proves that, in addition to intensifying the embargo and damaging the Cuban economy, the measures also aim to prevent millions of Americans from coming into direct contact with our reality, a right recognized for three consecutive years by a substantial majority of the United States Congress. What are Mr. Bush and the ultra-reactionary mafia responsible for enacting this irrational policy afraid of?

One aspect of the United States plan is particularly cynical. On the one hand, it imposes drastic restrictions on the remittances that Cubans residing in the United

States can send to their relatives in Cuba yet, on the other hand, it allows and encourages anyone to provide money and material support to the groups of traitors operating here under Washington's orders. While depriving United States citizens of their right to visit Cuba, the Administration spends federal funds on arranging for individuals from third countries to come here with the express purpose of supplying these mercenaries. Over the next two years, US$ 59 million will be spent on those activities and on other actions designed to undermine Cuban society. Of that amount, US$ 18 million will be used for radio and television broadcasts from a C-130 military aircraft, an irresponsible and illegal provocation that violates international aviation and telecommunications law.

The United States is also threatening to apply with increasing arbitrariness those sections of the Helms-Burton Act specifically designed to penalize businessmen from third countries. In the celebrated "understanding" it signed with the European Union, the United States Administration undertook to endeavour to eliminate those sections of the Act. However, it never took any action in that respect. Now Bush, adding insult to injury, is threatening to implement them even more aggressively.

Disingenuously disguised as "assistance to a free Cuba", the infamous document, consisting of over 450 pages full of hatred, lies and tiresome rhetoric, describes in minute detail the measures that Washington would impose if it managed to take possession of our country. Cuban society would be completely subjugated to the United States, which would dominate each and every one of its activities. A complete account of such unbridled interventionism would be endless, but some aspects of the United States plan offer an idea of the extent of the servitude and exploitation to which Cubans would be subjected:

- One of the first tasks of the so-called "transition government" would be to restore property to the former exploiters, including dwellings and land sought by the annexionist mafia that supported Batista. The process, which would be rapidly completed, would be overseen by the United States Government by means of a special mechanism. The infamous document specifically provides for the eviction of those residing in reclaimed dwellings or unable to pay exorbitant rents, the return to the practices of evicting peasant farmers and dissolving farming cooperatives and the reconstitution of the former large estates. The provisions of the Helms-Burton Act are now expressed in even more blatant language.

- All sectors of the economy would be privatized, and a permanent United States government committee for economic reconstruction, to be established immediately, would control them.

- Subsidies and price controls in respect of goods and services supplied to the public would be abolished.

- The social security and welfare system would be dismantled and benefits and pensions would no longer be paid.

- Health-care and education services would be re-privatized.

This would be a return to the most brutal form of capitalism under the yoke of a foreign power.

The consequences for our people would be so terrible that even the report itself acknowledges that the "transition" "would not be easy" and would be met by widespread opposition from Cuban society. For this reason, it stresses that the "immediate priority" is the assembling of repressive forces that would be organized, trained, equipped and advised by the United States Government.

As evidence of his genuine intention to go through with the intervention and subject Cuba to an annexionist regime, the President of the United States would immediately appoint an official responsible for coordinating all the aggressive measures designed to overthrow the Revolution. This official, a kind of hybrid version of Valeriano Weyler and Leonard Wood, would subsequently lead the interventionist government: A truly genocidal strategy.

The United States will certainly not be able to bring such evil plans to fruition.

It would first have to invade this country and initiate a military occupation and then crush popular resistance. This will never happen. We are ready and willing to fight to the death to prevent it. If they attack us, they will find a united, educated population with a glorious history of heroism, struggle and sacrifices for freedom that will never surrender its independence or its ideals of justice and solidarity and will never relinquish the fine, noble and profoundly humane society that it has managed to construct despite the empire's acts of aggression. If they attack us, they will suffer their greatest and most humiliating defeat.

We shall confront these measures and any others that our enemies may devise. We shall stand our ground and fight. Firmly united behind Fidel, Raúl and our Party, guided by their wise and consistent leadership, we shall advance ever onwards to victory.

National Assembly of People's Power of the Republic of Cuba

Havana, 1 July 2004

Year of the 45th anniversary of the triumph of the Revolution